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THROUGH THE ARTIST'S EYES

by

TERENCE FULTON, MD, FRCP, FRCPI

Consultant Physician, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

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TWENTY-FIVE years ago last month Mr Ernest Morrison FRCS kindly asked me to look after a man whose character and courage I came greatly to admire and whose close friendship I was privileged to enjoy during the remaining five years of his life.

Zoltan Lewinter-Frankl was born in Hungary in 1894 and the family later moved to Vienna. Such was his love of paintings that by the age of 16 he had already started a personal collection. In the First World War he served with a German Hussar regiment and was awarded the Iron Cross. In 1938, because of the pogroms and the gathering clouds of war he, his wife Anny and his sisters-in-law left Vienna en route for Canberra. When they reached London, however, they were persuaded to come to Ulster and start a knit-wear factory, Anny Lewinter Ltd, in Newtownards, then a depressed area with skills in handweaving and embroidery.

Immediately after his arrival in Ulster in April 1938, Zoltan Lewinter-Frankl began to take a keen interest in the painting and sculpture of his country of adoption and before long he had met many of its artists. He became an admirer, patron and personal friend of Jack B. Yeats, William Conor, Paul Nietsche who painted a portrait of him in 1944, Daniel O'Neill, Colin Middleton and John Hunter. On the wider scene he got to know Charoux, Epstein, Topolski, Stanley Spencer and F.E. McWilliam and owned important works by them.

Paintings from his personal collection were shown in 1944 in the CEMA Gallery in Belfast and in the 1950's in exhibitions of Contemporary Ulster Paintings in Edinburgh and Sheffield. In 1958 he was honoured by a special exhibition of the

Lewinter-Frankl Collection at the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery. In a foreword to the catalogue Mr Frederick Allen, Teacher of Art at Stranmillis Training College, wrote: "In the past, works of art have always been the normal offspring of the happy marriage between art and patronage and to maintain this process Zoltan Lewinter-Frankl sets a most praiseworthy example. It is certain that Ulster has never before possessed such a patron of art. We are grateful to him for his generous sharing of his treasures and to Belfast Corporation for providing galleries for their display, which exceeds anything that has been shown before in Ulster".

This was the man, with his consuming interest in and infectious enthusiasm for art, whom through medicine I had the great good fortune to know. I shall always be grateful to him because he opened for me a magic window through which life acquired an entirely new perspective.

The artist is often considered to be man's most sensitive interpreter of the pageant of life, with its joys and sorrows, its successes and failures. Many of the world's greatest artists have been attracted to subjects that are familiar to medicine, from studies of anatomy to the portrayal of the infirm, the insane, the crippled and the blind.

In selecting for this address paintings and drawings of medical interest the principal constraint has inevitably been the limited time at my disposal tonight and I am very conscious of having deliberately or unwittingly omitted famous works which others might well have chosen to include. Nor have I attempted to cover all the different aspects of medicine and its specialties. My approach has been governed primarily by artistic considerations, so that many of the paintings and drawings are major works by great artists, and are not merely interesting illustrations of medical topics irrespective of the stature of the artist.

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519)

Leonardo, the illegitimate son of Caterina, a peasant girl, and Ser Piero da Vinci, a Florentine notary, is acknowledged to be one of the greatest geniuses of the Italian Renaissance. To say that he was a unique genetic mutation is to put into modern scientific language Vasari's 16th Century verdict that "his genius was the gift of God". He was endowed with remarkable intellectual power and physical strength and skill. Others may have matched him as an artist but no one else possessed, in such a high degree, that curiosity about the physical world which is the foundation of modern science combined with mastery of the arts of drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture. Throughout his life his writing and drawing were accomplished with his left hand.

Leonardo's studies of human anatomy, based on careful dissection, display knowledge which exceeded that of his contemporaries in the medical profession who were also quite unprepared for his application of physical laws to human anatomy in his conception of the mechanical forces operating at the joints. In Dr Kenneth D. Keele's arresting words: "thus in anatomy, as in so many other aspects of his life's work, Leonardo was a man who awoke too early in the dawn of the scientific Renaissance whilst others still slept". To his remarkable knowledge was added his unique skill in recording his discoveries on paper, making them not only important scientific diagrams but also superb works of art.

In the course of his dissection of the skull and brain, Leonardo made several discoveries which were unknown before his time, for example, the maxillary and frontal sinuses. Concerning *Two Views of the Skull Dissected to Show the Cavities of the Orbit and Maxillary Sinuses* (1489), he noted that removing the “bone armour of the cheek” showed the “bony cavity of the orbit in which the instrument of vision is hidden”. The cavity below is the maxillary antrum which “contains the humour which nourished the roots of the teeth. The hole ‘n’ is the place from which the tears rise up from the heart to the eye, passing through the canal to the nose”. Until 1901, when these drawings were first thoroughly studied, it was believed that the maxillary antrum was discovered by Nathaniel Highmore in 1651.

Leonardo showed great interest in vision and was probably the first to draw the optic chiasma and to demonstrate the path of vision from the back of the eyeball to the base of the brain as in *The Optic Chiasma and Cranial Nerves* (1506-8). It was he, not Rembrandt, who described the eye as “the window of the soul”.

For every abdominal surgeon *The Stomach and Intestines* (1506-8) should surely be a hallowed drawing because it is the first known illustration of the appendix.

Dr Bernard Schlesinger referred to Leonardo’s studies of *The Infant in the Womb* (1510-12) (Fig. 1) in the Dawson Williams Lecture given in Belfast in 1962 at the 130th Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association presided over by Sir Ian Fraser. “This profound philosopher states his ideas on heredity and physiology in his commentary, in mirror writing, on the dissection: ‘In the case of his child the heart does not beat and it does not breathe, because it lies continually in water. And if it were to breathe it would be drowned, and breathing is not necessary to it, because it receives life and is nourished from the life and food of the mother And a single soul governs these two bodies and the desires and fears and pains are common to this creature And from this proceeds that a thing desired by the mother is often found engraved upon those parts of the child which the mother keeps in herself at the time of such desire’. How singularly near the mark are these ideas in some respects but how far wide in others, the truth about the circulation having to await William Harvey’s pronouncements over a century later”.

The studies of the skeleton and muscles completed between 1508 and 1510 are among Leonardo’s most impressive and beautiful drawings and illustrate perfectly his contention that good draughtsmanship will tell more than a thousand words. In his drawing *The Spine* (1508-10) the articulated vertebral column is shown in the beauty of its natural curves and with the vertebrae of each part correctly numbered, the first time this had been achieved. His drawing *Superficial Muscles and Veins of the Arms* shows also the superficial veins of the chest and abdomen.

When one reflects on the circumstances in which Leonardo carried out his anatomical studies and recorded so beautifully what he found, his achievement is all the more remarkable. There is good reason to believe that using the hours of daylight and darkness he dissected more than thirty bodies, many of which were the mortal remains of those who had been executed as criminals, “quartered and flayed, and horrible to behold”.

Perhaps the most significant legacy of Leonardo the anatomist and scientist are his thoughts on the place of research in the scheme of things. “Consumed as he was by curiosity and a passion for investigation, he was never one who believed in

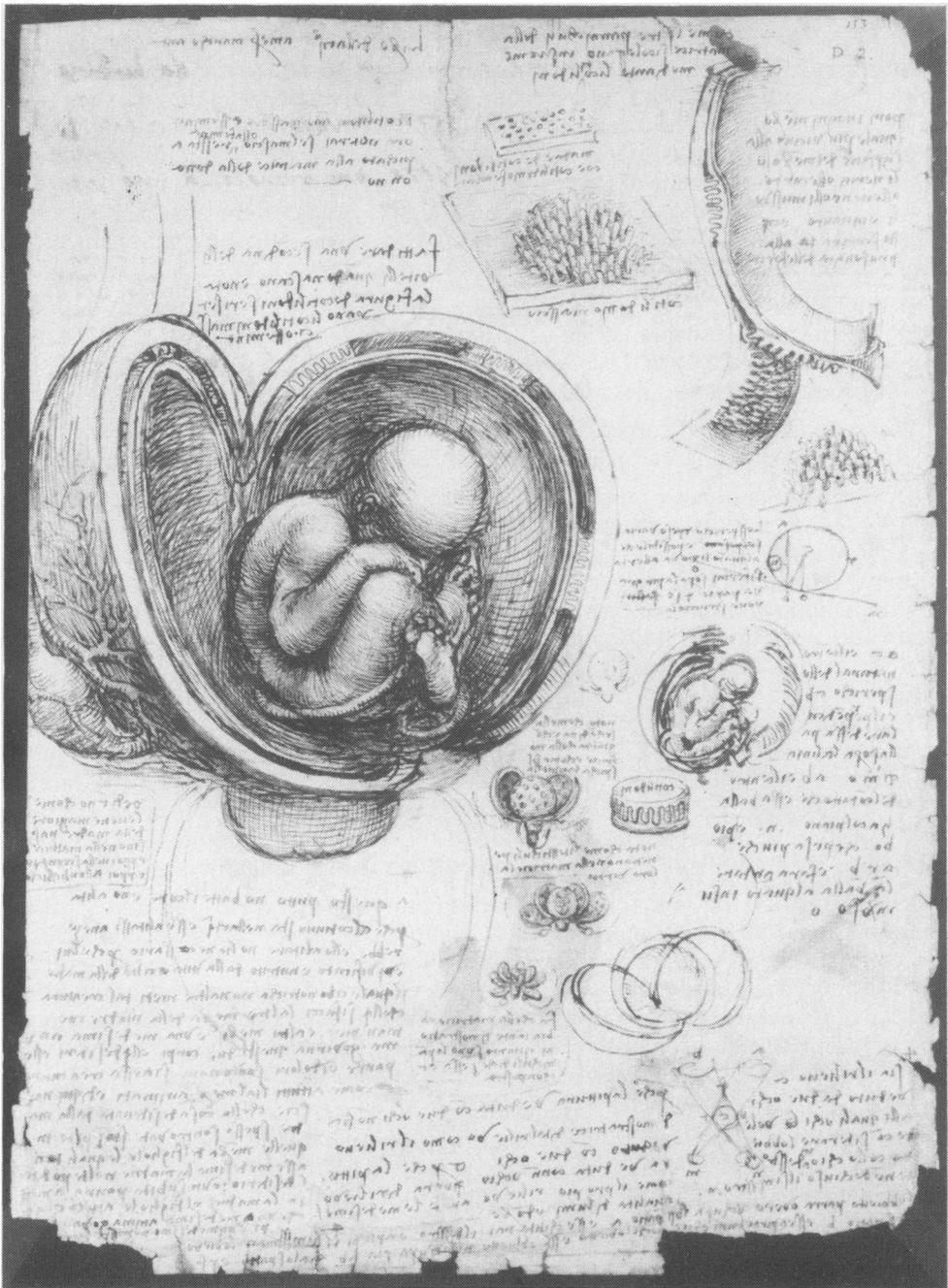


FIG. 1 *The Infant in the Womb* (1510-12) by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

science for science's sake" (Keele). Leonard said: "From it (science) is born creative action which is of much more value" and his further words have as profound a meaning for us as they did when he wrote them over four-and-a-half centuries ago: "This generation deserves unmeasured praises for the usefulness of the things they have invented for the use of man: and would deserve them even more if they had not invented noxious things like poisons, and other similar things which destroy life or the mind".

ALBRECHT DÜRER (1471-1528)

Born in Nuremberg on the eve of the Reformation, Albrecht Dürer was the son of a Hungarian goldsmith. He was the third of eighteen brothers of whom only three survived and all became painters.

His drawing of his mother Barbara Dürer (Fig. 2) in 1514 shows her in late middle age, careworn and wasted, and with a divergent squint. Dürer, who inherited from her the same disorder, believed that a portrait protected its subject from death and considered that he should be one of the first to be thus preserved! Few other artists have left so many self-portraits. In the silver-point *Self-Portrait* (1522) he draws attention, perhaps of a doctor, to the spleen which is said to have caused him pain.



FIG. 2
The Artist's Mother (1514) by Albrecht Dürer

PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER (1527-69)

The subjects represented by Pieter Bruegel, the pre-eminent Flemish painter of the 16th Century, were drawn from popular theatre and holy day processions, local folklore and proverb books. While he shared the predilection of his times for allegory and symbolism, he portrayed his fellow men with Netherlandish robustness and honesty, and through all his work runs a remarkable strain of worldly wisdom and humour. Such qualities were needed to offset the rigours of religious discipline and Spanish court etiquette and it has even been suggested that Bruegel's pictures may partly have taken the place of the court jester. They were collected by some of the most cultivated and wealthy members of Flemish society of his day and reflect the tastes and attitudes of the bankers and merchants who commissioned them.

Bruegel's peasant paintings bear witness to the great interest in countryfolk in the 16th Century. Although many townspeople laughed at their simple boorish ways, some must have envied their peaceful, untroubled country lives untouched by the cares and corruptions of the city. *The Peasant Wedding Feast* (1567-8) portrays a scene of traditional country revelry but P.D. Trevor Roper, with fine clinical perception, has drawn attention to the bride, seated at the centre of the festivities, her coarse and puffy features suggesting that she has myxoedema.

In *The Parable of the Blind* (1568) a procession of sightless men shuffles across an open field. The first two have stumbled into a ditch and it is clear that a similar fate awaits the others. Their infirmities are said by Trevor Roper to include leucoma, cataracts, phthisis bulbi and perhaps blepharospasm associated with iridocyclitis. However, these hapless creatures were not painted to arouse sympathy for their physical condition, but just as Christ told the parable of the blind to illustrate the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees (St Matthew 15: 14) so Bruegel's painting symbolises the spiritual blindness of all men. It is his most moving portrayal of the human condition.

Interpretations of *The Cripples* (1568) vary widely. In Michel Laclotte's opinion these poor creatures may be lepers who are known to have worn fox tails on their clothing during Carnival. The scene may be taking place in the courtyard of the lazaretto as they prepare to depart and the woman on the right may be a nurse. On the other hand, this may be an allegorical painting, the fancy headgear worn by the wretched men representing different social classes—the imperial crown, the military shako, the peasant's cap, the burgher's beret and the bishop's mitre. W.S. Gibson considers that the compassion we feel today for such people would have been out of place in Bruegel's day when begging was condemned, it being widely held that poverty was largely self-inflicted. Beggars had long been regarded as cheats and scoundrels who often faked their deformities in order to attract public charity, a timeless image of human deceit. Bruegel portrays these wrecks of humanity with little compassion, their coarse faces and mutilated bodies resembling Bosch's devils, and in *Cripples, Fools and Beggars* he illustrates their extraordinary repertoire of deformities and the walking aids that they employed.

In 1574 Abraham Ortelius wrote that Pieter Bruegel was the most perfect painter of his century, praising his fidelity to nature and his ability to depict "many things that cannot be depicted".

PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577-1640)

At a time when the Protestant Netherlands was steadily achieving independence, Catholic Flanders remained under Hapsburg rule and Flemish art continued to be largely under the patronage of the Church and of the Court at Brussels. The return in 1608 of Rubens to Antwerp, the cultural headquarters in Flanders of the Counter-Reformation, provided a powerful impetus especially to religious painting, the greatest accomplishment of his many-sided genius.

Rubens painted *Le Chapeau de Paille* in 1622, his model being the attractive and vivacious Susanne Lunden née Fourment. So life-like is the picture that attention is drawn to the presence of a goitre by the slimness of the neck above it. Two prominent veins can be discerned on the right of her cleavage and also some smaller vessels on the neck and upper chest. The face is dominated by wide blue eyes but

there is no hint of exophthalmos. *Le Chapeau de Paille* is a favourite portrait and as Susanne married for the second time when she was just twenty-three years of age, it is apparent that in real life others also admired her. Indeed, it is easy to see that Rubens painted her with great affection and she is known to have sat for him more than once. After the tragic death of his first wife, Isabella Brant, he married Susanne's younger sister, 16-year-old Hélène Fourment who haunts his last portraits which are memorials to his love for her.

In his impressive portrait of *Marie de Médicis* (1622-5) the French Queen Mother, Rubens conveys a sense of majesty by adding width to her figure, thus conforming to the fashion of the day. She also has a goitre and although she appears alert, composed and completely at ease, there is just a hint of hypothyroidism.

Ludovicus Nonnius (1627), a Portuguese physician resident in Antwerp, was the author of a number of books including a famous treatise on diet, 'The Dieteticon' published in 1627, the year of the execution of his portrait. Rubens showed him in his study flanked by a bust of Hippocrates, the father of Medicine.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF DUTCH ART

The 17th Century loved genre painting and at a time when the Netherlands was emerging as a nation from those United Provinces which, in the cause of political and religious freedom, had successfully defied the imperial power of Spain, there now arose the greatest school of genre painting in the history of art. There was virtually no land-owning nobility nor was the Reformed Church a source of patronage of the arts, but the peace and prosperity of the country, the structure of society and the pride and joy of the Dutch people in their own special kind of patriotism all contributed to the sudden intense flowering of artistic talent that has been one of the major influences in the history of art.

In the Netherlands, unlike other countries, the enjoyment and ownership of paintings was not confined to the wealthy and educated. While the gap left by the loss of ecclesiastical patronage was filled by the highly successful merchants, the ordinary people had the opportunity of seeing paintings of all kinds displayed at the many village fairs throughout the country. The demand for different kinds of paintings led many artists to specialise in particular subjects so that, for the first time, they produced and kept in stock pictures that people liked and would buy.

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69) was the greatest of all Dutch artists. From his earliest years he studied men's faces in order to correlate the play of expression with changing emotions. In 1632 Dr Nicolaes Tulp, a famous surgeon of the day, commissioned Rembrandt to paint his public dissection and demonstration of the anatomy of the arm for the Surgeons' Guild of Amsterdam. *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) won immediate and universal admiration and in the space of a few months made his name as a portrait painter.

Rembrandt always wished to excel as a religious painter and studied the Bible over and over again. Because of his ability to translate into paint his faith and piety, he ranks with the greatest of all religious artists. In his *Saul and David* (1657), Saul, King of the Israelites, having sinned against God, is being tormented by attacks of dark depression which have him completely in their power. Despite his regal splendour, he is a pitiful and unhappy man, utterly alone behind the velvet curtain

which conceals him from David, his humble servant, immersed in his cithern playing. All the people praise David because only he could save the Israelites by slaying Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, but Saul is filled with a raging hatred and twice tries to kill him with a spear.

The infirmity of blindness is portrayed in several of Rembrandt's Bible paintings, including *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph* (1656) and *Tobit and Anna with the Kid* (1626). Tobit remained a true servant of God even when he became blind and was confined to the house. His wife Anna earned a pittance by her spinning. Rembrandt chooses the moment when old blind Tobit, horrified by his mistrust of his own wife, prays for forgiveness for having suspected her of stealing the kid which she could never have afforded to buy but had received as a present.

From the beginning of his career, Rembrandt was profoundly interested in old people and the inner life and character of his subjects became more important to him than their outward appearance. His deep humanity and his sympathy for his sitters enabled him to paint them with great insight and tenderness, as in *Portrait of an 83-year-old Woman* (1634) and *An Old Man in an Armchair* (1652), both hanging in the National Gallery in London.

Even had there never been a Rembrandt, his contemporaries would still have made the 17th Century Dutch School of pre-eminent importance. The other great Dutch masters all had the ability to translate into paint the space, light and atmosphere which enveloped ordinary people in their kitchens, bedrooms, courtyards, or under vast skies.

The Group portrait was almost exclusively a Dutch tradition. In the background of Werner van den Valckert's (1585-1627) group portrait of *Governors of the Leprosarium in Amsterdam* (1624) can be seen a bas relief in which are shown dogs licking the sores on the legs of Lazarus.

Gabriel Metsu (1629-67) specialised in intimate scenes of middle class life and in *The Sick Child* (1660) a mother gazes tenderly at her little one. However, the attention of the *Mother Combing Her Child* by Gerard ter Borch (1617-81) is focussed on an entirely different problem, the quest for nits!

Jan Steen (1626-79), one of the most prolific and versatile Dutch artists, holds a special place in genre painting, embracing both lowly and fashionable subjects. *The Doctor's Visit* was one of his favourite themes but never did he depict tragedy or death. The painting with this title contains several important clues to the probable cause of the attractive and elegantly dressed young lady's malady. While the doctor feeling her pulse strikes a self-important pose and gazes intently into the distance, the lady in attendance, who is probably her mother, observes him with an amused and knowing smile. In the coalpan on the floor a smouldering string has been prepared for use. According to popular belief, victims of fainting fits would come to if the doctor held a burning apron string under their noses, and in the case of young ladies no one considered any cause but pregnancy. The statue of Cupid standing on the mantelpiece confirms that love is at the heart of this little domestic drama.

In *The Blood-letting* by Q.G. Brekelenkam (1620-68) the old granny is busy attaching a cupping glass to the young lady's arm. With the help of this instrument she will bleed the girl to see if she is pregnant or not. The basket of slightly wrinkled yellow cucumbers on the table has special significance, alluding to the Dutch proverb, 'Virginity like cucumbers should not be kept too long!'

Jan Steen's expertise as a lively storyteller with good-humoured malice is shown in *A Toothpuller*. On the other hand, *A Surgical Scene* by Gerrit Lundens (1622-83) is no laughing matter and one's sympathies are entirely with the patients.

The Lady in Blue by Jan Vermeer (1623-75) is thought to be his own wife painted in the 1660's during pregnancy. It is hard to realise that in spite of his magical glimpses of ordinary everyday life, his perfect colour sense and the timeless quality of his subjects, Vermeer's work was not appreciated until two centuries after his death when the Impressionists became absorbed in the effects of light and colour.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SPANISH PAINTING

In 17th Century Spain truth to life was considered to be the essence of a work of art.

The Bearded Woman (Magdalena Ventura with Husband and Son) by Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652) was commissioned in 1631 by Ferdinand II, Third Duke of Alcalá, Viceroy of Naples and is signed with an inscription which translated reads: "The great wonder of Nature, Magdalena Ventura, from the town of Accúmole in Central Italy . . . aged 52 years, the unusual thing about her being that when she was 37 she began to become hairy and grew a beard so long and thick that it seems more like that of any bearded gentleman than of a woman who had borne three sons by her husband, Felici de Amici, whom you see here. Jusepe de Ribera, a Spanish gentleman of the Order of the Cross of Christ . . . painted this scene marvellously from the life . . ." However, there are other disturbing features in this portrait for which no explanation is offered, for example, the large apparently single breast and the fact that this bearded woman is shown at the age of 52 suckling her own infant son. Artistic licence perhaps? Ribera conveys in a masterly way the intensity of the husband's incomprehension and resentment of his wife's masculinity.

The Clubfoot (1652), a lowly counterpart of Valázquez's court dwarfs, stands impishly outlined against the sky, his crutch over his shoulder and a note in his left hand begging for alms, suggesting that perhaps he cannot speak. While Schlesinger thought it possible that the deformities of the right arm and leg were due to infantile hemiplegia he had reservations about this diagnosis if indeed the boy was aphasic.

Diego Rodriguez de Silva Velázquez (1599-1660), the greatest of all Spanish artists, was appointed court painter to King Philip IV at the age of 23 and remained in his service for the rest of his life. Jesters and dwarfs, often young boys and girls of good birth, had long been a feature of European courts and noble houses and were chosen as pages and playmates for the royal family. Their quips and quirks helped to break the icy formality of etiquette and fashion and their portraits often decorated the palaces of their masters.

An achondroplasiac dwarf Francisco Lezcano, called 'the Biscayan', came to court in 1631 and was assigned to amuse Prince Baltasar Carlos, then age 2 years. They are shown together in Velázquez's painting *Prince Baltasar Carlos with his Dwarf* (1631). In a later portrait *Francisco Lezcano* (1638-42) is shown perched on a rock in a mountain landscape, his beclouded brain symbolised by the blackness of the cliff against which he is posed. He died in 1649. Another achondroplasiac Don Diego de Acedo, nicknamed *El Primo* (1644) was jester to the royal court of Philip IV.

It may be that the presence at court of these unfortunate members of society afforded lessons in understanding and compassion as well as providing amusement, diversion and entertainment.

GEORGIAN ENGLAND: THE AGE OF ELEGANCE

England in the 18th Century was a land in which civil peace and personal liberty were more secure than ever before, and growing sections of the community enjoyed increasing wealth and leisure. Art was an integral part of life. The paintings of Hogarth, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Wilson were matched by a remarkable flowering of literature. The social aristocracy of the day included the wealthier clergy and the cultivated middle class, and houses in town and country were as rich as museums and art galleries.

It was into such a society that William Hogarth (1697-1760) was born in London and for which he created his celebrated series of anecdotal pictures, *The Harlot's Progress* (1730-1), *A Rake's Progress* (1735), *Marriage à la Mode* (1743-5) and *The Election* (1754), satirising social abuses and pointing a moral.

The final scene of *A Rake's Progress* shows him in chains in Bedlam (Bethlehem) Hospital, then one of the sights of London where, as elsewhere, the treatment of lunatics was brutal in the extreme. In *Marriage à la Mode* venereal disease, quackery, murder, suicide with laudanum and capital punishment by hanging follow one another in rapid succession, leaving a tainted child as the sole issue of a loveless union.

In *The Election*, Hogarth first shows an entertainment at an inn in the county town. It has been arranged by one of the candidates for the reception of his friends some time before the poll in order to ensure his interest, for without it he would have little chance of success. His opponent's supporters are throwing bricks through the windows and an attorney has been struck and knocked from his seat. A member of the Corporation has had rather too much punch while a parson and an alderman are cramming themselves with food 'to the destruction of their health'. Indeed the alderman, gorged with oysters and with another on his fork, is dying and 'a barber surgeon is vainly attempting to recover him by bleeding'.

At the poll the maimed, the blind, the deaf and the dying attend to register their votes. The first to tender his oath to the swearing clerk is an old soldier whose bravery in the service of his country has cost him a leg, an arm and a hand, hence the protest against his vote on the ground that he cannot hold up his right hand on taking the oath. Next comes a man fastened to his chair, evidently deaf and mentally defective, who is prompted by another shouting in his ear. Behind them, carried in a blanket, is someone who looks so ill that 'he cannot be supposed to feel much interest in the concerns of a world he is on the point of leaving'. And finally a blind man and a cripple slowly and cautiously make their way up the steps to the hustings.

Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), the most talented and prolific satirist and caricaturist of the late 18th Century, is said to have been "well balanced though inclined to the normal excesses of the period, hard drinking, gambling and promiscuity". Fortunately his "zest for life" was matched by an enthusiasm for work and a dislike of debt!



FIG. 3
The Apothecary and His Assistant at Work (1814) by Thomas Rowlandson

FIG. 4
Another Whiff and All Is O'er, Gaffer Goodman Is No More (1815)
by Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827)



In *Sham Fits* (1802), the studied inaction and unconcerned gaze of the gentleman sipping his wine are in sharp contrast to the flurry of activity on his side of the table where the family mongrel is thoroughly roused and the older woman is endeavouring to restrain the buxom young lady in the full flight of her hysterical fit.

Ague and Fever (1788), one of the classics of medical iconography, shows the snake-like coils of Ague twining round the shivering victim who is seated before a blazing fire while Fever, with his quivering heats, stands between the patient and his physician who is waiting to add his own persecutions to the sick man's misery. Regrettably, the future looks even more bleak for the waiting queue of patients in *The Apothecary and His Assistant at Work* (1814) (Fig. 3).

In those days the benefits of a second opinion were sometimes illusory as in *When Doctors Three the Labour Share, No Wonder Death Attends Them There* (1816). And at that time, Rowlandson, an astute observer of social customs and their consequences, could see for himself the lethal effects of heavy smoking which he vividly illustrated in *Another Whiff and All Is O'er, Gaffer Goodman Is No More* (1815) (Fig. 4).

James Gillray (1757-1815) was famous for his coarse, scurrilous caricatures which were invariably more personal than Hogarth's social comments. At the beginning of the 19th Century, vaccination was a very controversial issue and was violently attacked by word and cartoon. In *Cow Pock* (1802) the scene is probably the Smallpox and Inoculation Hospital at St Pancras and the administering physician Jenner himself. Gillray's coloured etching *The Gout* (1799) (Fig. 5) is considered to be one of the most imaginative representations of a disease. It may be that his startling portrayal of the pain, swelling and inflammation was inspired by personal experience, for his death was said to have been caused by intemperance.

The Headache (1819) (Fig. 6) by George Cruikshank (1792-1878), Gillray's successor as political cartoonist, is so dramatically conceived that it too may have been based on his own knowledge of such an event.

FRANCISCO JOSÉ GOYA Y LUCIENTES (1746-1828)

At first Goya was employed in painting cartoons for the Royal Tapestry Factory, the subjects being scenes from contemporary Spanish life portrayed in a romantic and decorative style. *The Injured Mason* (1786-7) is such a painting, the model for a tapestry to decorate the dining room in the Palace of El Pardo. It may well have been inspired by an edict issued by Charles III specifying how scaffolding was to be erected in building construction in order to prevent accidents to and the death of workmen. In this instance, however, the two men carrying the victim have jovial expressions and this has given rise to the modern title *The Drunken Mason!*

In 1786, Goya was made Painter to the King but in 1792 he was struck down by a long and serious illness, probably meningo-encephalitis, which is said to have caused temporary paralysis, partial blindness and permanent deafness so that thereafter he had to communicate by sign language and by writing. During his convalescence he painted a group of eleven cabinet pictures in which he was able to indulge his fantasy and invention. *The Madhouse* (1793) was one of this series and though comparable to Hogarth's *Bedlam Hospital* in *The Rake's Progress* it is a more dark, forbidding and horrifying place.

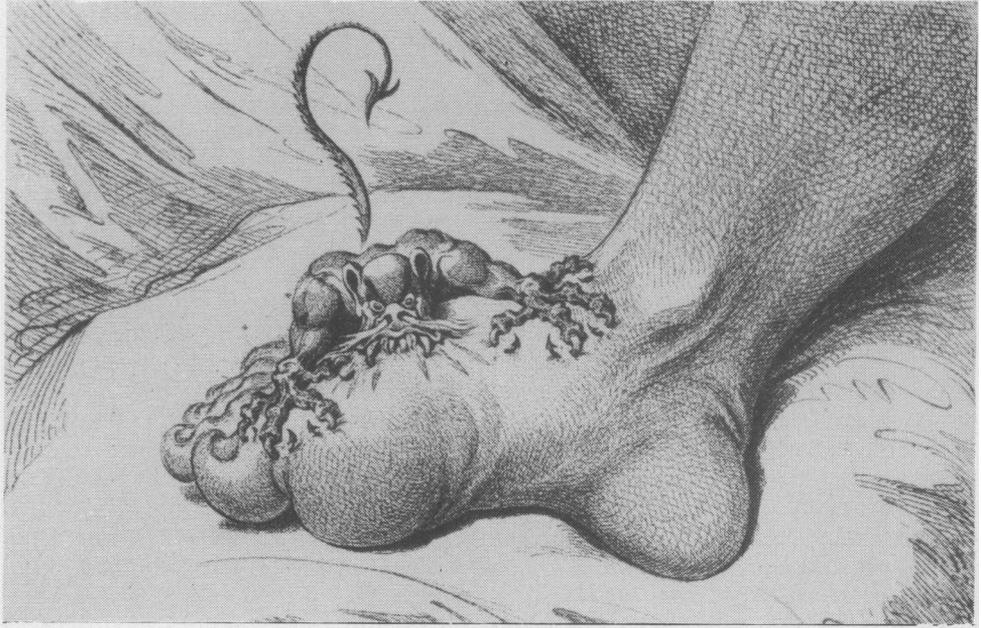


FIG. 5. *The Gout* (1799) by James Gillray

FIG. 6. *The Headache* (1819) by George Cruikshank



Although forced by his deafness into a solitary existence Goya lived through this personal crisis. His portraits showed great sensitivity and understanding of human nature and here Rembrandt was his guide. The portrait of *Infanta Maria Josefa* (1800) has the added interest of the large black mole on the right temple. One of Goya's latest studies was *Tio Paquete* (1820), a well-known blind beggar who sat on the steps of San Felipe el Real in Madrid and was invited to play his guitar and sing in the houses of court society. It is on the work of his maturity and old age, penetrating, violent and sombre, that Goya's reputation as the greatest master of his time and the first of the moderns rests.

JEAN LOUIS ANDRÉ THÉODORE GÉRICAULT (1791-1824)

It is said of Géricault that had he not died so young he might well have become the Rembrandt of French painting. His collaboration with Dr Etienne-Jean Georget, a distinguished young psychiatrist at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris where he set up his easel, resulted in the painting in 1822-3 of ten notable portraits of the insane. In these he emphasised the individuality of his subjects, their disturbed mental state being subtly reflected in their facial expression and their bearing, not by the use of caricature or by placing them in a recognisable medical setting. Only five of the original ten portraits are known to remain in existence. They include *The Mad Kidnapper* (1822), *The Woman With Insane Jealousy* (1823) and *Madman With Delusions of Military Grandeur* (1822). In the last of these the subject wears what purport to be a military shako and a high decoration, and his mind is preoccupied with affairs of great moment.

Géricault himself suffered from profound depression which seriously interrupted his work. It is likely that his interest in and understanding of those who were mentally disturbed were deepened by the experience of his own distress.

HONORÉ-VICTORIN DAUMIER (1809-79)

The essence of the satire of France's greatest caricaturist lay in his ability to portray a man's whole character in his face and to convey mental folly by depicting physical absurdity. In *Oh Doctor, I'm Sure I'm Consumptive* (1847), a corpulent middle-class hypochondriac, full of self-pity is being visited at his home by his long-suffering family doctor whose humanity and good nature have prevailed despite severe provocation.

The attitudes and expressions of the passengers in *An Omnibus During An Epidemic of Grippe* (1858) (Fig. 7) almost compel one to share their discomfort and misery, whereas not even the seeming inevitability of a nerve-racking experience in *Let's See, Open Your Mouth* (1864) can quell its delicious humour. In *The Country Doctor* (1840) (Fig. 8) Daumier pays a touching tribute to the quiet dedication and unrewarded and often unchronicled self-sacrifice of the country doctor.

PAUL GAVARNI (1804-66)

Daumier's fellow countryman, who revolutionised the art of disguise by inventing new costumes for balls, carnivals and entertainments of all kinds, created in his drawings real men and women with their little habits, tricks and absurdities, their sensibilities, appetites and hypocrisy. Taken from the series 'The Vexations of Happiness', *Colic On His Wedding Night* (1838) must surely be one of the most ludicrous descents from the emotionally sublime to the ridiculous.



FIG. 7
*An Omnibus During
An Epidemic of
Grippe (1858)*
by
*Honoré-Victorin
Daumier*



FIG. 8
*The Country Doctor
(1840)* by
*Honoré-Victorin
Daumier*

VICTORIAN PAINTING

A profound change in the taste and morals of society occurred during the 1830's and 1840's. The ribaldry and high living of the late Georgian period gave way to the Victorian ethic of restraint, decorum and gentility, so that by the time the earliest number of *Punch* appeared in 1841, little more than a decade after Rowlandson's death, both the lifestyle and the humour of society had been transformed. There was a strong sense of propriety sometimes amounting to prudishness, the humanitarian idealism which imbued society came through in art as sentimentality and painters tended to be obsessional in endeavouring faithfully to depict nature.

Thus the tendency to poke lighthearted fun at august personages, for example Henry Liversidge's (1803-32) late Georgian lady seen in *A Touch of the Spasms*, gave way to sober contemplation, as in *An Anxious Hour* (1865) by Mrs Alexander Farmer in which a young mother watches over her stricken child. *The Blind Girl* (1856) by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-96), conveys a feeling of inner peace and trust, truly reflects nature and fulfils all the ideals of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The elegant lady in James Tissot's (1836-1902) two delightful paintings of *The Convalescent*, executed in the early 1870's, may well have been Mrs Kathleen Newton his mistress.

Sir William MacCormac, who graduated in 1857 at Queen's College, Belfast, was one of those chosen by Sir Luke Fildes (1844-1927) to portray the physician in his well-known painting *The Doctor* (1891). It is an unsentimentalised study of medical compassion when all else that could be done had already been done. Fildes' *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* (1874) is based on his drawing 'Houseless and Hungry' published in the first issue of *The Graphic* on 4th December 1869, and was probably inspired by the description by Charles Dickens of a scene outside Whitechapel Workhouse in 1855. In the line of figures stands an anxious father carrying an emaciated, bare-legged child against which huddles his weeping wife, two little girls and a young boy clutching his abdomen. It is said that when the top-hatted central figure, whom Fildes 'found' during one of his nightly wanderings through the streets of London, was being painted he was given a pint mug of porter and was made to stand on sheets of brown paper liberally sprinkled with Keating's powder. When this painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy a reviewer in *The Art Journal*, while praising its realism, considered it a matter for regret that such a state of affairs should be perpetuated in art!

Whether *A Visit to Aesculapius* (1880) by Sir Edward Poynter (1836-1919), a perfect example of the spurious classicism so much criticised by Daumier and his friends, was a more acceptable representation of how sick people should look, it would certainly do wonders for the morale of physicians in charge of medical out-patient clinics and take-in medical units if family doctors would try to refer more patients with this kind of problem!

In this International Year of the Disabled thoughtful consideration is being given to helping those who by their skill, courage and determination often put to shame the able-bodied. Whether the *Siamese Twins* (1836) painted by Edward Pingret felt in need of such attention or were fully reconciled to their unusual lot in life, history does not record. However, may I commend to you Miss Sarah Biffin (1784-1850) who was born without arms or hands almost two hundred years ago. She painted with her shoulder assisted by her mouth and was exhibited at fairs by her first

teacher Mr Dukes with whom she remained contracted for 16 years. The Earl of Morton secured not only her second teacher but also royal patronage and she made a successful career as a miniaturist. Her self portrait in watercolour is in the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

VINCENT WILLEM van GOGH (1853-90)

The son of a Lutheran pastor, van Gogh was brought up in an atmosphere of poverty and stern idealism which played an important part in moulding his character. He eventually came to the conclusion that art was his only means of salvation through bringing joy and understanding to others and by uniting him with the great masters. He became obsessed by the symbolic and expressive power of colour which he used, not to reproduce visual appearances, but as a means of conveying his feelings.

On 23rd December 1888, after a violent argument, he threatened Gauguin with a razor but was put to flight by the latter's gaze and then cut off the lobe of his own right ear. Subsequent events were reported on 30th December 1888 in a local Sunday newspaper 'Le Forum Républicain': "Last Sunday night at half past eleven a painter named Vincent van Gogh, a native of Holland, appeared at the maison de tolérance No. 1, asked for a girl called Rachel and handed her . . . his ear, with these words: 'Keep this object like a treasure'. Then he departed. The police, informed of these events which could only be the work of an unfortunate madman, looked next morning for this individual whom they found in bed with scarcely a sign of life. The poor man was taken to hospital without delay".

It seems certain that van Gogh was no 'unfortunate madman' but the wound he inflicted upon himself was undoubtedly an expression of a mental disorder that was to manifest itself repeatedly thereafter. A short period of listlessness was followed by rapid recovery and his artistic output quickly returned to normal. *Self-portrait With Bandaged Ear* was painted in January 1889, within one month of this distressing episode.

During the next year-and-a-half he had further attacks considered by many to be psychomotor epilepsy, by others to be schizophrenia, and by Professor G. Kraus to be 'psychogenic attacks on a psychopathic basis'! He emphasised that many reactive elements were present and that there was no evidence of epileptic fits or dementia. Kraus considered that only in *Crows Over the Wheat Field*, painted in July 1890, shortly before he committed suicide, is there evidence of deterioration in van Gogh's mental state. His remarkable ability to convey the intensity of his emotions is shown in the sheer ecstasy of *A Starry Night* (June 1889) and the despair and desolation of the old man *On the Threshold of Eternity* (May 1890).

Van Gogh's art was totally dedicated to the exploration of man's inner life and to the expression of his deepest feelings.

HENRI-MARIE-RAYMOND de TOULOUSE-LAUTREC-MONFA (1864-1901)

Toulouse-Lautrec came from a noble family whose history could be traced back to the time of Charlemagne. Rickety and delicate from infancy, he fell in 1878 and again in 1879, breaking first one leg and then the other, and was left crippled for life. He was as conscious of his deformities as any court dwarf and was haunted by

the fear of being a misfit. This in large measure accounted for his enjoyment of disreputable company—circus and music-hall artists, pimps, prostitutes, perverts and the like—in which he felt more at ease and less of an oddity than in the social world to which he belonged by birth. By a mixture of charm, impudence and a coarse but playful wit he succeeded in getting himself accepted on terms of equality and was treated as a homely and harmless monster in whose presence it was possible to behave naturally. He was thus able to steal behind the façade of gaiety, garishness and glamour to record frankly and without moral criticism what he saw in bars, brothels, bedrooms and operating theatres.

For Toulouse-Lautrec living creatures always took precedence over landscape or still life and, like van Gogh, he had special concern for the individual. It has been said that in his open-minded and outspoken attitude towards sex he was unique in his time and that man's sexual activities form the subject of some of his greatest pictures. He was very familiar with the *Salon in the Rue des Moulins* (1894), in which he sometimes spent several days as a curious observer, and the social and professional implications of the scene that he recorded in *La visite: Rue des Moulins* (1894) would have been well known to him.

EDVARD MUNCH (1863-1944)

Munch was the foremost modern Norwegian artist and one of the principal founders of Expressionism. His mother died of tuberculosis when he was five and thereafter his father, a shy, deeply religious, kindly and dedicated physician in a poverty-stricken part of Oslo, became melancholy, suffered bouts of acute religious anxiety and led a life of seclusion. Munch said of his early years: "Disease, insanity and death were the angels which attended my cradle and since then have followed me throughout my life. I learned early about the misery and dangers of life, and about the after-life, about the eternal punishment which awaits the children of sin in Hell"

The Sick Child (1906-7) was inspired by the deaths from tuberculosis of his mother and sister Sophie. She is shown sitting up in bed, gazing wistfully through the window, still hoping that she will get better while her mother, no longer able to hide her grief, lets her head sink on her breast in despair.

In *The Heritage* (1897-9) he portrays with brutal frankness the horror and heartbreak caused by the ravages of syphilis, another of the scourges of the age, in the innocent infant victim of a thoughtless and self-indulgent world.

Munch wrote about *The Scream* (1893): "I was walking along the road with two friends. The sun set. I felt a tinge of melancholy. Suddenly the sky became a bloody red . . . and I looked at the flaming clouds that hung like blood and a sword over the blue black fjord and city . . . I stood there, trembling with fright. And I felt a loud, unending scream piercing nature". The screaming figure holds both hands in terror to its head, its mouth wide open and body convulsed. The colours and the wavy lines express the intense anxiety and fear that he felt.

Dr K.E. Schreiner, Munch's physician, met with determined opposition in his efforts to cure his neurosis and insomnia to which his alcoholism was undoubtedly an important contributory factor.

PABLO RUIZ PICASSO (1881-1973)

Picasso was the greatest draughtsman and most influential European artist of our time. He worked on a great number of themes in a remarkable variety of styles. It is largely due to him that the conception of art as a powerful emotional medium rather than a search for the perfection of ideal forms of beauty has become accepted among present-day artists (Roland Penrose).

Throughout his life Picasso was preoccupied with images and events that had a special significance for him and during the years 1901-4 poverty, blindness, love, maternity and death were often in his thoughts. In the later months of 1901 his painting grew increasingly introspective, the lively street scenes and vivid portraits giving way to the brooding melancholy of the Blue Period. Forlorn and mournful were his subjects, the vagabonds, beggars and prostitutes, who frequented the bars of Montmartre or the streets of Barcelona. Blue was the prevailing colour that he used to portray such anguished themes.

The Old Guitarist, painted in 1903, shows the pitifully thin and twisted body of the old blind beggar expressively distorted in a manner reminiscent of El Greco, a wailing lament on his lips. In *Woman Ironing* (1904), Picasso touches our hearts by his deeply moving portrayal of her defencelessness and frailty, and her resignation to the unremitting drudgery of life.

LAURENCE STEPHEN LOWRY (1887-1976)

The only child of an estate agent and his wife, Lowry was born and educated in Manchester. Although his lifestyle was simple and frugal in the extreme, he always had ample opportunity to observe the world without having to become too closely involved in its affairs. He was deeply devoted to his mother who was the focus of all his affections until her death when he was fifty-two. Not only did this make it difficult for him to establish a normal relationship with any other woman but it also contributed to his withdrawal from the world in his increasingly isolated and lonely role as an observer of life. The precise time of his retreat is marked by the portrait *Head of a Man with Red Eyes* which was painted under great emotional stress in 1936 when his mother was very ill. It is the face of unconsolable loneliness and grief.

People in their many and varied activities fascinated Lowry not because he was interested in them as individuals, nor out of sympathy for their poverty, ugliness, stupidity or eccentricity but just because they were isolated, grotesque or ridiculous looking. Indeed he refused to be touched by life, by people or events. In *The Cripples* (1949), whom he described as "funny to look at", he expresses no pity but almost seems to mock suffering. A feeling of incomprehension isolates the *Woman with a Beard* (1957), a portrait based on a lady who boarded the Cardiff-Paddington train at Newport. Little sign of human warmth can be detected in *Ancoats Hospital Outpatient Hall* (1952) but, rather, a sense of isolation among those waiting to be seen.

For Lowry, beauty was not to be found in man the person "but rather . . . the masses of people, in the patterns and shapes and rhythms that they made against the background of streets and buildings, mills and factories . . ." (Mervyn Levy).

In *The Fever Van* (1935), the action takes place in just such an industrial landscape but the curiosity of the locals about what is happening in their street ensures that, for a brief moment at least, man has attained a position of equality with the buildings.

In his delightful drawing *The Painter and the Connoisseur* (1568) (Fig. 9) Bruegel portrays to perfection the relationship that exists between the artist and his patron. The former, with fierce concentration of mind and eye, achieves that beauty of line for which he has been striving while the latter, his tutored gaze enchanted by the painter's matchless art, beams with approval and satisfaction.



FIG. 9
The Painter and the Connoisseur (1568)
by
Pieter Bruegel

It is my hope that, in thus presuming to comment upon the works of great artists, whose vision, understanding and skill have given delight and inspiration to the passing generations, I have not trespassed on hallowed ground. It is my wish that one day, like Zoltan Lewinter-Frankl, I too may possess a discerning eye.

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